



**Robert Land
Academy**
LOYALIST
December, 2023



WELCOME

The members of the Newsletter Club have been hard at work putting together the second issue of their newsletter. Along with the stories featured on page one, inside there is a message from the Headmaster as well as messages from the board, the Family Guild and the new chair of the Alumni Committee. University offers are already coming in and our grads share their good news as well.

HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

As everyone at Robert Land Academy knows the Holiday Stand Down is getting closer and closer. The students of Robert Land Academy will have a stand-down for 2 weeks starting from December 21.

FINISH READING ON PAGE 7



AIMING FOR THE TOP

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FINISH READING ON PAGE 3



THE PERFECT TREE

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FINISH READING ON PAGE 2





IN SEARCH OF

THE PERFECT TREE

By Nathaniel Campbell

This month A Company cut down a tree for the mess hall on December 8 with the ASM. They were told to put on their coveralls because it can get pretty messy. In the past A coy cut trees from the campus. One time they were running out of trees to cut down so they used to go to a tree farm about 4-5 years ago. Normally A coy would cut down a tree near the forests on the campus or out beside the soccer field. Despite the headmaster's wishes A company cut down a tree near the mess hall. After the hard work put in by A coy to cut down the tree they all went to the mess hall for a nice treat by Ms Nieuwold. The students each had 3 Christmas cookies and they had icing to decorate their Christmas cookies. All of the students describe their experience in one word: muddy, fun, amazing, exciting, wet, nice, good, awesome and interesting.



The Top Three

By Nick Thompson

Robert Land Academy senior staff convene each year to select and appoint students to top jobs at the Academy. Known as the "Top Three", the three positions of Head Boy, Parade Sergeant Major and Aide-De-Camp are the highest student positions at RLA.

As ASM Zahra explains, the students who apply must be involved with the Academy, be a mentor to his peers, and lead by example. He also noted that students who exceed all Academy standards, in academics, performance objectives, and conduct, are good examples of these positions,

"I enjoy working with these boys and giving boys the opportunity to be successful where they may have not have had the chance before," says ASM. "I always enjoy the days where I get phone calls back from Old Boys and hearing about the success that they have had since leaving the Academy."

The Head Boy Position at Robert Land is the most senior boy. He is the face of the Academy, he must set the standards Academically and in the Barracks. The Head Boy is also responsible for the command of the parades and represent the academy everywhere when needed.

The Parade Sergeant Major is responsible for the drill of Robert Land Academy. He is in charge of helping students with getting off remedial drill and are also responsible for the carrying out of the operations of the parade. They are known for yelling the command of the front rank steady and dressing the Academy on parade, They also represent the Academy and work closely with the other Top Three.

The Aide-De-Camp is the face of the Academy and the student body. He raises all issues of the students with the senior staff. He is known for escorting the Academy Headmaster and guests of the Academy to parade or inspection.

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The Academy invites all students to apply for these jobs each year. They must go through a process of tough questions and much review of paperwork from staff. The candidates this year are follows,

- Stephan Paterson(Head Boy)(HB)
- Nick Thompson (Parade Sergeant Major) (PSM)
- Will Kludjian (Parade Sergeant Major)(PSM)
- Steven Tang (Aide-De-Camp)(ADC)
- Duncan Larmer (Aide-De-Camp) (ADC)
- Tom Zunik (Aide-De-Camp) (ADC)
- Naveed Goodwin(Aide-De-Camp)(ADC)

In Order to gain consideration for these jobs the students must go through a process of writing a memo explaining why they think they are a good candidate for the job. The Academy Sergeant Major and Headmaster review these letters and, if they have been persuaded the student is a good candidate, will grant interviews. Students chosen for an interview receive a letter outlining the date and time for their interview.

Dressed in their Scarlet uniforms, the students attend the Board Room for an interview with the Headmaster and ASM, where they are asked difficult questions and discuss their strengths, and their mistakes.

Senior staff choose the student for each position based on the interview as well as their experience at RLA. The Headmaster has the final say on which student is appointed.

"I feel like this is year it will be interesting to work with these boys and who gets these positions and what they offer to the student body" said Steven Tang, the current C-Coy Platoon IC who has applied for the position of Aide-De-Camp, "I applied to give back and do the boys at the Academy the time and knowledge that I have".

The Top Three will be announced on December 20th with a full review and insights in the upcoming Loyalist Article.



A message from Headmaster LCol Peter Stock

As we continue our academic journey, I, LCol Stock, am thrilled to update you on the exciting developments at our Academy since our last publication.

Reflecting back to October, Maj Krywuluk and I had the enriching experience of visiting China, where we strengthened our global connections with education agents. The highlight of this trip was undoubtedly visiting the Great Wall of China. This awe-inspiring monument is not just a marvel of ancient engineering but a symbol of the enduring power of dedication and perseverance - qualities we strive to instill in every student at Robert Land Academy.

More recently, our educational endeavors took us to Berlin, Germany. Immersed in the rich history and the

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poignant reminders of war, we found ourselves reflecting on the importance of learning from the past. The resilience and transformation of Berlin serve as a powerful lesson for our students: understanding history is not just about learning facts, but about building the wisdom to shape a better future.

I am also excited to share the progress of our new reward system.

This initiative has been a resounding success in encouraging and recognizing our students' commitment to their academic and program efforts. I am particularly proud to announce that two of our students, Stephen P and Tom Z, have achieved perfect scores, making them the latest members of the prestigious '100 club'. This remarkable accomplishment is a testament to the dedication and hard work that we value at our Academy.

The 'student spotlight' continues to shine brightly, capturing the outstanding actions of our students and sharing these moments of triumph with their parents. This initiative not only celebrates the successes of our students but also strengthens the bond within our Academy community, affirming the positive impact of our collaborative efforts.

As we move towards the end of the year, let us remember the lessons from our trips to China and Germany. Just like the Great Wall of China and the resilient spirit of Berlin, the path to educational excellence is built on perseverance, learning from history, and a commitment to continuous improvement. These experiences remind us that the journey of education, much like the journey through history, is filled with challenges but leads to remarkable achievements.

Let's stay committed to this journey of growth and learning. Together, we are building a foundation for a future as impressive and enduring as the historical landmarks we've witnessed.



HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

By Nathaniel Campbell

As everyone at Robert Land Academy knows the Holiday Stand Down is getting closer and closer.

The students of Robert Land Academy will have a stand-down for 2 weeks starting from December 21. They will be going home for Christmas break and to experience the new year. Multiple students are going to be doing fun activities with their family and friends.

Students each have different traditions and activities they are looking forward to during the holiday season.

Double Barman Oscar O said "food and family," are what he is looking most forward to. Oscar, who is from Mexico, said his family will likely go to the beach this year, although in the past they've usually travelled to another country for the holidays.

Oscar said Christmas traditions in his family are very similar to Canadian traditions, although the food is traditional Mexican foods, his favourite being chilaquiles.

Cadet Seif E, who lives in Egypt, said he will be travelling to Turkey with this family and go shopping over Stand Down. Seif does not celebrate Christmas, but observes Ramadan, which is coming up in March. Seif explained Ramadan celebrates the ninth month, considered a holy month in the Islamic calendar. During Ramadan Seif will wake up at 4:50 am to eat and then for the rest of the day, until 7:30 he will fast and not drink water or eat.

Recruit Zihao S said that the big holiday celebration coming up for him is the Chinese New Year. He also added that one thing he looks forward to is taking a hike on the highest mountain with friends. He said another thing is he is going to have a nice dinner with his family. Cadet Powles said he is excited to put up a Christmas tree with his family and how the new year is something that he is looking forward to.



MOTHER SON DAY MEDALISTS

By Nathaniel Campbell

Around the start of November Mother Son Day took place at Robert Land Academy. More than 35 mothers and guardians came to participate in the activities with their sons. Students and Mothers enjoyed a nice brunch together. The students arrived in scarlets for the brunch and then got dressed into tracks to start participating in the events. The Mothers had the opportunity to have their photo taken with their son while he was in scarlets with Lieutenant Lewis.

After the brunch Major Simmons gave all the mothers and sons a speech about why mothers are important before the events began. The events the teams took place in were airplane, escape room, shooting, rock climbing, painting and creative writing. After the events were over the Mother Son teams who did the best in each event were presented with awards and had photos taken. When students exited the mess hall at the end of the day they had big smiles on their faces and were happy to have had a fun time with their parents.

The six awards given out were Slick Scientists, Sharpest Shooters, Educated Escapists, Writing Warriors, Painting Proteges and Climbing Kings.

"I liked me and my mom doing the same events together and getting the same reward," said Sergeant Stephan P after winning the Slick Scientists medal.

Double Barman Pedran J received the Climbing Kings medal with is mom, stating the things he liked most about mother son day are the activities and getting to interact with your mother as a family.

" It's a time for us to reunite with our family and have a fun experience at RLA," said Recruit Jack S when describing Mother Sondag. He also said it felt good to win an award with his mom after receiving the Educated Escapists

Cadet Ammar A, who won the Sharpest Shooters medal with his mom, also said it was nice to win at something he never tried before.





A message from

Board of Governors Chair Tim Hudak

I was honoured to be asked to speak on behalf of the Board of Governors at the Celebration of Life for LCol Ryan Smid in November. It is very clear that he was well-liked, highly respected, and an inspiration to many, myself included. Major Simmons also spoke on behalf of the school and his comments connected deeply with those in attendance. It was heartwarming to see some of our past students there as well as a number of Academy staff and board members, demonstrating that he was a respected leader and will be missed on campus. The many leaders from the Canadian Armed Forces in attendance spoke volumes about Ryan's service and standing in the CAF.

As we start the Holiday Stand Down in a very short couple of weeks, I find myself reflecting on the triumphs and challenges we've all experienced this school year, and looking forward to the promises that lie ahead for both our students and the staff.

One of my favourite days in the RLA Calendar is coming up on January 25, Governor's Day. It is an opportunity for board members to recognize student successes over the first semester with an inspection and parade. I know I speak for the entire board when I say it is very rewarding to present students with well-earned awards during the Governor's Dinner.

I know staff are looking forward to their favourite RLA event, Father Son Day on Saturday, January 20. It is a time for fathers, stepfathers, grandpas, uncles, brothers and other male role models to spend some time on campus with our students competing in some very silly games. I know our staff love the day because students and dads get to have some fun and our staff get to know our students' families in a more relaxed atmosphere.

Of course, the promises that lie ahead require hard work and commitment, and both staff and students are looking beyond the fun events on the horizon to the goals for the remainder of the school year, beginning with Stand Down homework.

On behalf of the Board of Governors, I hope this season brings you peace, happiness and fulfillment and our staff and students a happy and restful Stand Down.

Happy Holidays



Name & Rank: Mel Nieuwold

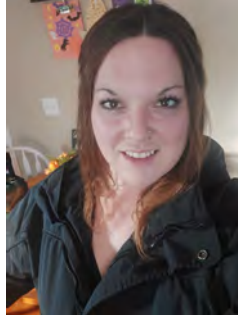
Position/Title: Kitchen 2IC

How long have you worked at RLA: 5 years

What do you like best about RLA: Cooking for the boys.

What is your favourite food in the mess hall: Any Sunday Meal

Mel Nieuwold, a member of the hardworking and talented kitchen staff at RLA, makes and decorates sugar cookies for the students each year before the holiday Stand Down, and this Halloween was spotted handing out candy dressed as a giant, pink blow up unicorn.



A member of the staff for over 5 years, Ms. Nieuwold says her favourite part of the job is making food for the boys, especially the Sunday dinners, which are typically big, traditional comfort food style meals.

"Making food is an art, which is what I enjoy the most in cooking for the boys at Robert Land Academy, we have the freedom to create new recipes and try new things," is what she says keeps her motivated, adding making and decorating the Christmas cookies for the students is part of that and it's a traditional celebration for the students just before the holidays.

Mel says she did not take any baking or decorating courses, she is self-taught and she tries her best to continue learning. It's something she's done since she was little.

"I always cooked meals for others since I was young and all through college and I just fell in love with it (cooking)," she said, adding her time at RLA has been amazing and she really enjoys her work and says it's a rewarding job to make someone's day with a great meal or treats.



I'm not getting promoted. What should I do?

They say Honour is doing the right thing when nobody's watching. This is what WO Kevin Battersby alludes to when offering advice to students who ask why they are not getting promoted.

Everyone is always watching, says Battersby, referring to the fact that staff are always paying attention to student behaviour and making many mental notes to use when deciding on promotions and student awards.

If a student shows leadership and good behaviour at all times, even when the student isn't aware staff are paying attention, they demonstrate they're acting with honour and will be noticed by staff.

Even when you think no one is watching you, you should always be your best, at RLA, at home and in the workplace.

It only takes one person to see one bad action to make assumptions about who you are.

Doing the right thing when no one is watching will ensure you are always judged well by others. As at RLA, good behaviour and doing your best will lead to promotions and other successes. It's important, as well, says Battersby, to "worry about yourself" and your own actions rather than what other students are doing to be promoted.



Season ending mud bath for Baseball Club

By Nick Thompson

Robert Land Academy boys never seemed to be scared of the cold weather.

This past weekend members of the baseball club had fun while having a mud bath. As Baseball is usually over and many sports fan move to watching different sports such as basketball and hockey, the boys challenged themselves to persevere and play in a mud-filled field.

The Baseball Club began at the start of the current academic year as a new club and new interactive group game led by MWO Schafer.

The Saturday club saw many members challenge themselves to overcome muddy conditions and try new things, The mud-filled field did not stop them and as play continued through the mud the teams noticed the opportunity to imagine life as a United States Marine Corps Soldier. They decided that it would be fun to take a headfirst dive into the base while running the bases.

Myself and my team of Ryan J and Nicolas P were leading by many runs, so we decided to change the tone of play and run into the mud. Nicolas hit the ball and then dove face first into first base wearing only a shirt and shorts. Ryan and I quickly followed suit. Later a push up challenge started as the boys did push ups in the mud while continuing to wrestle in the water and play around.

Soon, all members of the club had accepted this challenge and the group continued by having a competition of who would dive into the water with Brian B, Sebastian P and Justin G, taking their own dive into the cold muddy water.

Although many baseball players are training for the new season, the RLA baseball club continues to play, though the weather has made a season ending memory of a mud bath.



A message from Family Guild Chair Lisa Thompson

The academic year seems to be flying by with the Christmas break just around the corner! In the student spotlights and weekly communication pieces boys are busy participating in many varied volunteer activities, clubs and sports teams, building incredible character and resilience.

From the chess club's mental challenges to Lego club's creativity, these extracurriculars are shaping their interests and skills. The boys learn collaboration, respect for diverse ideas, and expression of their thoughts.

From the Fall Ex, cross country trails, boxing and wrestling rings to the basketball and volleyball courts, the boys showcase teamwork, discipline, and perseverance—learning to rebound from setbacks and support each other through wins and losses.

Beyond academics, these experiences teach time management, work ethic, and resilience through navigating competitions and club commitments. Leadership, communication, adaptability, and empathy are ingrained, laying a strong foundation for their future.

The pride in the boys is so evident through the pictures and stories celebrating their personal growth and many accomplishments.

As you reflect upon the success and personal growth your boys are experiencing, please share the Robert Land Academy story with other families who might benefit from the growth and varied opportunities available at the Academy.

Lastly, I would like to extend warm wishes to all families, faculty and staff for a joyous holiday season filled with love, peace, and cherished moments with loved ones. May this festive season rejuvenate our spirits and pave the way for a fabulous 2024!



A message from

Academy Sergeant Major Paul Zahra

Remembrance Day has come and gone once again. All the hard work on drill practices in the rain and cold, paid off. I heard many positive comments from the staff how well the boys looked on parade. From the boys reading at the cenotaph, bell ringer, colour party, band, the boys in the top three positions and the boys marching, everyone put in a great effort. I was happy with their turn out and thank each student for their effort on a day special to so many of the staff. I was very impressed by all the boys on parade.

I looked over at the student body during the moment of silence, with head dress off, heads bowed and the bell ringing in the background, no movement from anyone, there was an eerie quiet over the campus. It made the day much more special.

Our guest were very thankful to be in attendance. LCol .Smid's wife spoke to me after parade, she was overwhelmed with the ceremony and was moved to tears, you made it very special for Mrs. Smid and her family.

Winter is coming ... all boys in grade 12 that need community service hours, should be eager to help when I call for snow shovelers and salting crews. I would like to get all Grade 12 students the required hours of community service to graduate, I also want to ensure the academy walkways are free and clear of ice and snow for the safety of everyone on campus.

An ASM inspection is coming before the Holiday Stand Down begins. Old boys know what to expect and how to pass my inspection, make sure you go over my expectation with all boys in your company, so everyone will have a good inspection.





Alumni Committee Chair Paul Vrana

By way of introduction my name is Paul Vrana and I am the newly elected chair of the Robert Land Academy alumni committee. Working with my newly elected vice chair Matt Perusco we will be leading the activities of the alumni association for the coming year. On behalf of the entire committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing chair James Patterson for his leadership and commitment to the committee. He has done an excellent job and we will have big shoes to fill.

As for myself, I am an old boy having attended the school between 1983 and 1985 for grades 11 and 12. I was the schools head boy in my graduating year and later after completing my post secondary education I returned to teach at the Academy. I had the opportunity during those years to teach both Chris McLeod our first Chair the Fundamentals of Financial Accounting and James Patterson our second chair precision drill. It is very gratifying to see them both as grown men still holding the values and culture of Robert Land Academy in such high esteem.

While the committee has not set its goals for the coming year, some of the projects we are currently working on include;

- Modifying our web portal to make it more accessible and user friendly to the alumni.
- Creating an alumni legacy award/bursary to be awarded annually at graduation.
- Creating an alumni display for the cadet annual inspection / alumni homecoming that would among other things display historical artifacts and media from the many years gone by.

As alumni, we all recognize the tremendous support and direction we received, and how it has informed our lives and helps guide us even to this day. As such, our committees overarching goal is to give back to an institution that gave it's all for us. If you are a former staff or student and would like to be a part of the alumni please contact Sarah Whitaker (swhitaker@rla.ca) at the academy.

Hears to a successful year ahead and may your socks always smile.

The John Brant Award

The John Brant Award was created by Robert Land Academy to recognize community leaders, particularly in the areas of education, politics and the military, whose lives and careers embody the values of the school: loyalty, labour, courage, commitment, and honour.

Is there someone who comes to mind when you think about leadership and the Academy values?

We are currently accepting nominations for the 2024 recipient of the John Brant Award, which will be presented at the RLA Gala on April 20.

Dave Levac, then speaker of the provincial legislature, was the first recipient of the award in 2018. The following year it was presented to General Walter Natynczyk, former Chief of Defence Staff. After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the award was presented to Rob Nicholson, former MP for Niagara Falls in 2022 who had a long and stellar political career.

Learn more about the award and nominate someone today on our website at www.rla.ca.

This year's Gala Event will be held on Saturday, April 20, 2024 at the Fallsview Casiono Resort in Niagara Falls. Layne The Auctionista will once again bring their energy and excitement to the event as our host and MC.

Tickets are \$200 each or a table of 10 for \$1800. A portion of the ticket price is elibigle for an official tax receipt. Tickets will go on sale on January 12, 2023. There arer a limited number of reduced rate hotel rooms at the Casino. They can be booked when tickets are purchased. Rooms at other hotels can be booked directly through the hotel.



For more information visit trellis.org/rlagala.

Gala
Saturday, April 20, 2024

Please join us in Niagara on April 20, 2024
Fallsview Casino Resort, Niagara Falls
6 pm reception 7 pm dinner
Tickets on sale early 2024

More Information trellis.org/rlagala



First post-secondary acceptance letters received by RLA graduates

For the past 13 years every RLA graduate has been accepted to the post-secondary program to which he applied, ranging from computer and medical sciences to culinary arts and fire-fighting.

For the graduating class of 2024, those post-secondary acceptances have already starting arriving. The Newsletter Club plans to use this space to acknowledge post-secondary offers as they are received by the graduates.



Nick Thompson was the first to receive the coveted "congratulations" letter from the University of Long Island in the BA Political Science Program. He also received a sizeable scholarship for each of the four years of the program.

Thompson is the first RLA student to receive an offer from Long Island University.

Thompson said he wasn't expecting any offers until the new year so he was very surprised, and wanted to scream "I got accepted" when he first read the letter on December 5.

"All the hard work I put in at RLA paid off," said Thompson, adding this university wasn't his first choice, so when other offers arrive he will need to make a decision on where he plans to go to school after graduating.

Following closely on the heels of Thompson, Steven Tang received an acceptance letter to University of Guelph earlier this week for the Computer Science program.

Tang says he was excited, very happy and proud of himself when he opened the letter.

"Getting an acceptance letter this early is a step up for me and boosted my confidence," he said.

Guelph is not Tang's first choice for university, so he is eagerly awaiting more letters in the new year.

